WILSON CABINET SPLIT ON EVE OF WORLD WAR

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moment is to get ships to carry the supplies across the water. It is a secret, but a fact, that France has 600,000 tons of freight in New York and other harbors waiting to ship. I am in favor of taking all the German ships under requisition, paying for their use eventually, but this is a matter of months. Immediately, I think we should take all the coastwise ships, or the larger portion of them. The navy colliers and army transports can be put into the business of carrying supplies to France.

We are to have a meeting of the council of national defense to-day, and I am going to take this matter up. I have been pushing on it for several weeks. As to the purchasing of supplies, I think we ought to protect the Allies, especially Russia, but, of course, we cannot touch their present contracts. . . .

Railroad Mobilization.

WASHINGTON, April 15, 1917.

The situation is not as happy in Russia as it should be. The people are so infatuated with their own internal reforms that there is danger of their making a separate peace, which would throw the entire strength of Germany on the west front, and compel us to go in with millions of men where we had thought that a few would suffice.

My work on the national council of defense lately has been dealing with many things, chiefly mobilization of our railroads and the securing of new shipping. At my suggestion to Mr. Willard he called together the leading forty-five railroad presidents of the United States, and I addressed them upon the necessity of tying together all of the railroads within one unit and making a single operating system of the 250,000 miles. They met the proposition splendidly and appointed a committee to effect this. It will require some sacrifice on the part of the railroads, and considerable on the part of the shippers; for free time on cars will have to be cut down, some passenger trains taken off and equipment allowed to flow freely from one system to the other under a single direction, no matter who owns the locomotives or the cars. I put it up to them as a test of the efficiency of private ownership.

On the shipping side we are not only going about the task of building a thousand wooden ships, under the direction of Denman and Goethals, but we are going to take our coastwise shipping off, making the railroads carry this freight, and put all available ships into the transatlantic business. We want, also, to get some steel ships built. The great trouble with this is the shortage of plates and the shortage of shipyards. In order to effect this, I expect we will have to postpone the building of some of our large dreadnoughts and battle cruisers, which could not be in service for three years anyhow. Whether we will succeed in getting the Secretary of the Navy to agree to this is a question, but I am going to try.

We, of course, are going to press into service at once the German and Austrian ships, such of them as can be repaired and will be of use in the freight business, but we will not confiscate them. We will deal with them exactly as we will deal with American ships, paying at the end of the war whatever their services were worth. This spirit of fairness is to animate us throughout the war. Of course enemy warships were seized as prizes of war, but there are very few of these, and of no considerable value. I do not believe they can be of any use.

Balfour's Mission.

England is sending over Mr. Balfour with a very high commission. These gentlemen will arrive here this week, and I expect with them Viviani and Joffre, from France. We will have intimate talks with them and gain the benefit of their experience. I expect Mr. Balfour to make some speeches that will put England in a more favorable light, and the presence of Joffre will stimulate recruiting in our army and navy. He is the one real figure who has come out of the war so far.

We are raising seven billions; three billions to go to the Allies, largely for purchases to be made here. Money contributions pass unanimously, but there is to be trouble over our war measures respecting conscription and the raising of an adequate army. Some pacifists and other pro-Germans are cultivating the idea that none but volunteers should be sent to Europe. Some are also saying Germany can have peace with us if she stops her submarine warfare. I doubt if that line of agitation will be successful before Congress. Certainly it will not be successful with the President or the Cabinet. We are now very happily united upon following every course that will lead to the quickest and most complete victory.

The greatest impending danger is the drive on the east front into Russia, possibly the taking of Petrograd, and the weakness on the part of the Russians because of so large a socialistic element now in control of Russian affairs. We offered Russia a commission of railroad men to look over their railroad systems and advise with them as to the best means of operating them. At first Russia inclined to welcome such a commission, but later the offer was declined because of local feeling. We intend to send a commission ourselves to Russia, possibly headed by McAdoo or Root, and on this commission we will have a railroad man wth experti knowledge who can be of some service to them, I hope. The Russian and the French Governments have ordered hundreds of locomotives and tens of thousands of cars in this country, a large part of which are ready for shipment, but which cannot be shipped because of lack of shipping facilities.

Envoys at Washington Tomb.

WASHINGTON, May 3, 1917.

These are great days. Their significance will not be realized for many years. We are forming a close union with France and England. The most impressive sight I have ever seen was that at Washington's Tomb last Sunday. We went down on the Mayflower—the French and the English commissions and the members of the Cabinet. Viviani and Balfour spoke. Joffre laid a bronze palm upon Washington's Tomb, then stood up in his soldierly way and stood at salute for a minute. Balfour laid a wreath of lilies upon the tomb, and leaned over as if in prayer. Above the tomb, for the first time, flew the flag of another country than our own, the Stars and Stripes, and on either side, the British jack and the French tricolor. This is a combination of the democracies of the world against feudalism and autocracy.

I heard a story from one of Joffre's aids. Joffre, by the way, is the quietest, sweetest, most naive and babylike individual I ever met. All of the women, as well as the men, are in love with him. This simple, grave, kindly soldier sat in his room while the Germans came marching upon Paris, saying nothing. Every few minutes an aid would come in and move the French markers back upon the map, and the German markers forward, toward Paris. Day after day he saw this advance, but said nothing. At last when they came to the valley of the Marne, an aid came in and marked the map, showing that the Germans were within thirty miles of Paris. Then Joffre quietly said: "This thing has gone far enough," and taking up a pad of paper he called to his troops to stand fast and die upon the Marne, if necessary, to save France. There is nothing finer than this in history.

Joffre has a skin like a baby. He has the utmost frankness and simplicity of speech. When McAdoo asked him at the White House if the present drive was satisfactory, he said in the most innocent way: "I am not there." Viviani, who is the head of the French commission, is as jealous as a prima donna, terribly jealous of Joffre (which makes Joffre feel most uncomfortable) because, of course, Joffre is the hero of the Marne.

Thought Balfour a Mystic.

I spoke at the Belasco Theater the other day for the benefit of the French war relief fund, introducing Ambassador Herrick and the lecturer, a young Frenchman. Joffre and Viviani were in a box. Every mention of the name of Joffre brought the people to their feet. Yesterday I spoke again at a meeting of the State Councils of Defense and I inclose you what the New York *Post* had to say.

Last night I dined with Balfour. I have seen quite a little of him. He is 69 years old and stands about 6 feet 2. He is a perfect type of the aristocratic Englishman, with a charming smile. His real heart is in the study of philosophy. Anne sat next to him at dinner and he told her that he believed in a personal God, personal identity after death, and answer to prayer, which is a remarkable statement of faith for one who has lived through our scientific age. I think at bottom he is a mystic.

On all sides they are frank in telling of their distress. We did not come in a minute too soon. England and France, I believe, were gone if we had not come in. It delights me to see how much sympathy there is with England as well as with France. The Irish alone seem to be unreconciled with England as our ally.

The country's crops are going to be short, I fear, and we have had little rain. Ships and grain—these are the two things that we must get. Ships, to carry our grain and our locomotives and rails, and grain to keep the fighters alive. The U-boats are destroying twice as much as the producing tonnage of the world.

French Desperation.

WASHINGTON, May 5, 1917.

I had a long talk with Hoover yesterday. He tells me that the U-boat situation is really worse than I stated it. There is no question but that the actual sinkings amounted to more than 300,000 tons in a week, and if we add those put out of business by mines they will exceed 400,000 tons. The French are absolutely desperate. One of the French Ministers told Hoover that they had fixed on the first of November as their last day if the United States had not come in. Admiral Chocheprat told me, with tears in his eyes, three nights ago that they felt themselves helpless. They are absolutely at the mercy of the submarines because of their lack of destroyers, and they had feared we were preparing to defend our own shores rather than fight across the water. I know that the latter has been the policy of the heads of the Navy Department. . . .

This is the time to defend the United States, and the United States is woefully indifferent to its dangers and to the needs of the situation. We have been carrying on a shipbuilding program with reference to conditions *after the war*. It is only within ten days that we have realized that the end of the war will be one of defeat unless we build twice as fast as we proposed to build. . . . This war is right at this minute a challenge to every particle of brains and inventive skill that we have got.

MAY 8.

The only dissension in the council is over the use that will be made of Hoover. Houston, I think, is rather making a mistake, though it may work out all right. I hope it will.

Pope's Appeal for Peace.

BEVERLY, Mass., August, 1917.

I had lunch yesterday with Col. House, who asked me what I thought should be done as to the Pope's appeal for peace. I told him I thought it should be taken seriously. He agreed and asked what the President should say. I answered that, inasmuch as all the evidence pointed to the conclusion that the German Centerists and Austria were responsible for this appeal, that we could not afford to have them feel that we were for a policy of annihilation—for this would be playing the war party's game and would place the burden on us of continuing the war. And this we could neither afford [to do] at home or abroad. This opportunity should be seized, I said, to make plain not so much our terms of peace as the things in Germany that seemed to make peace difficult—Germany's attitude toward the world, the spirit against which we are fighting. That we wished peace; that we had been patient to the limit; that we had come in in the hope that we could destroy the idea in the German mind that it could impose its authority and system by force upon an unwilling world; that we were not opposed to talking peace provided at the outset and as a *sine qua non* the Central Powers would assume that government by the soldier was not a possibility in the twentieth century.

The colonel said that he had written the President to this same effect. He thought that the Allies would strongly insist upon concerted action, putting aside the Pope's appeal, and that this had to be resisted, for we should play our own game.

I find all I meet here strong for the war, but of course I only meet the high spirited. There is much feeling that we are going about it too mechanically, with too little emotion and passion. . . .

Letter to the President.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 3, 1917.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT—On April 7, 1917, the Council of National Defense adopted a report, submitted by the chairman of the executive committee on labor of the advisory commission of the council, urging that no change in existing standards be made during the war, either employers or employees, except with the approval of the Council of National Defense. . . .

The next step for producing efficiency must be no strikes.

The annual convention of the American Federation of Labor, consisting of international unions, will be held at Buffalo on November 12. I would urge that about thirty executives of the unions, which more directly control essential war production, be invited to confer with you prior to that date to determine on a policy which will prevent the constant interruption of production for war purposes. The commissioners of conciliation of the Department of Labor and the President's Commission have a wonderful record of accomplishments for settling strikes after they have occurred. Organized labor should give the Government the opportunity to adjust controversies before strikes occur.

At this conference it could safely be made plain that for the war employers would agree not to object to the peaceable extension of trade unionism; that they would make no efforts to "open" a "closed shop"; that they would submit all controversies concerning standards, including wages and lockouts, to any official body on which they have equal representation with labor, and would abide by its decisions; that would adhere strictly to health and safety laws, and laws concerning woman and child labor; that they would not lower prices now in force for piece work, except by Government direction; that if a union in a "closed" shop after due notice was unable to furnish sufficient workers, any non-union employees taken on would be the first to be dismissed on the contraction of business, and the shop restored to its previous "closed" status; that the only barrier in the way of steady production is the unwillingness of the unions to uphold the proposition of settlement before a strike instead of after a strike.

The imminence of this convention seems to me to make some step necessary at this time. I would take the matter up with Secretary Wilson were he here and have sent a copy of this letter to him. You undoubtedly can put an end to this most serious situation by calling on the international labor leaders to take a stand that will not be so radical as that taken in England, and yet will insure to the men good wages and good conditions, and make sure that our industry will not be paralyzed.

[The third installment of Mr. Lane's letters will appear in THE NEW YORK HERALD to-morrow.]

WOULD CHANGE 'SOUTH FERRY'

Staten Island wants the name "South Ferry" changed to "Staten Island Ferry." Francis F. Leman, president of the Staten Island Civic League, sent a petition to the Board of Estimate yesterday stating that undoubtedly 80 per cent. of the passengers using the subway and "L" stations at Manhattan's southern tip are Staten Island bound and that the change of name would make it easier for them to find their way.